



Employee News

April 2003

News and Information for Muscatatuck SDC and Madison State Hospital Employees during the transition to community-based services.

Supported Employment Is Working for Persons with Mental Illness in Indiana

**David V. Perkins, Ph.D.,
Ball State University**

Twenty-nine Indiana mental health centers have provided supported employment (SE) services to thousands of persons with serious mental illnesses and other disabilities (often referred to as "consumers"). Since 1993, information on the characteristics and outcomes of 4,267 of these individuals has been provided to the Supported Employment Consultation and Training (SECT) Center at the Center for Mental Health in Anderson.

The typical consumer is 37.3 years old, has lived with mental illness for 11.9 years, and has been unemployed for 2.6 years. He or she has moderately severe symptoms (e.g., deficits in communicating verbally or managing emotions, with frequent interpersonal conflicts), and is eligible for public assistance in such forms as Medicaid, Medicare, and/or the Hoosier Assurance Plan. Most consumers live either independently (43.7%) or with their families (28.2%), while some (20.8%) reside in a supervised living arrangement (e.g., semi-independent living, group home).

Effectiveness: SE services reach the intended population, and consumers are demographically similar to Indiana's non-

FSSA Secretary Hamilton Responds To HoosierRx Question

Q How will FSSA address the prescription drug needs of low-income Hoosier Seniors with Indiana's economic challenges?

A Governor Frank O'Bannon recently announced that the Hoosier Rx program, which provides prescription drugs for low-income seniors, will get a boost of up to \$12 million from the federal government, ensuring that any senior who is eligible and applies for assistance will get it. This federal money should reassure current recipients that their benefits aren't going away and should encourage potential beneficiaries that there is help for them.

Anyone who thinks they may be eligible should apply. Indiana residents can call toll-free at 1-866-267-4679 or write to: HoosierRx, at P. O. Box 6224, Indianapolis, IN 46206-6224. The web site is: www.IN.gov/HoosierRx.

Indiana applied for this waiver of federal rules and is the sixth state to receive approval.

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disabled workforce: 55.0% are male; 86.3% are Caucasian, while 11.6% are African-American. However, SE consumers have chronic, persistent disabilities: 40.3% have a current diagnosis of schizophrenia and 27.9% a diagnosis of mood disorder (depression, bipolar disorder); 73.5% have been hospitalized for mental illness one or more times. Of those who receive at least three months of SE services, about two-thirds (65.5%) work competitively, averaging 23.6 hours of work per week (about 94.5 hours per month). The mean hourly wage for SE consumers increased steadily from \$4.95 at the close of 1995 to \$6.22 at the beginning of 2003.

The jobs consumers take fall into one of eight categories: housekeeping/cleaning, food service, retail/clerical, construction/laborer, janitorial/maintenance, outdoor/lawn care, assembly/light industry, or professional/technical. SE consumers are most often employed in food service (27.7% of consumers) or retail/clerical (22.8% of consumers) positions. Janitorial and maintenance jobs (12.3%) are also prevalent, followed by professional/technical jobs (11.1%). SE providers often discourage seasonal types of employment (outdoor/lawn care and construction/laborer), and only 1.5% of consumers hold employment in these areas.

Efficiency: The total cost of SE services to a consumer who works is approximately \$3,000. SE costs tend to be low (approximately \$200 per month) during the first 4-5 months of services as the consumer prepares to go to work, and increase (to between \$500 and \$600 per month) only during the 2-3 months it takes the typical consumer who works to achieve stable

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Message from Nikki Morrell

I hope you will all get to know me well as we travel this journey together. The newsletter affords me an opportunity to unify all of us with and invest in individuals with disabilities. It is critical that we garner public support and invest in activities on behalf of those we care for and about at this time. As we have seen before, there is strength in numbers and energy in size. Let's use both to develop and achieve our goals. Let us not lose momentum as we move forward in the development of our advisory panel and achievements. We are off to an admirable start--let's keep going!

Transformation to the Southeast Regional Services Center in Madison



Trying Times

With the nation at war, FSSA offers tips for families, teachers, & counselors. Visit:
<http://www.in.gov/fssa/servicemental/dmh/index.html>
or
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/childrenanxiety/tips.asp>

Melissa Hunter Seeks Masters Degree In Counseling Psychology and Special Education



Melissa Hunter

Melissa graduated from Brown County High School where she became well-known for her softball skills. Academic and athletic juggling paid off when she received a scholarship from Cumberland College for both. Melissa worked at Cummins in Columbus one summer, where she met her future husband, Aaron. For years prior to their marriage, Aaron sent flowers on Melissa's birthday as a constant reminder of their friendship. Melissa and Aaron have three children, ranging in age from 6 months to 4 years.

Melissa worked for ResCare in Lexington, Kentucky; and while in Columbus she worked for Christole, Inc. and DSI. In these positions Melissa gained experience working with MR/DD individuals. With thoughts of moving back to the Brown County area, Melissa remembered a tree lined drive she had once traveled as a child. Her school group had taken a field trip to Muscatatuck State Developmental Center (MSDC). In December of 1999, Melissa returned to MSDC in order to continue her career in public health. Presently she is a Social Services Specialist on three units at MSDC.

Six years after graduating with a degree in psychology and public health, Melissa is using the special FSSA fund to continue her education. She is now in the early stages of working toward a Masters in Counseling Psychology and Special Education. Melissa wishes to continue her career as a mental health counselor in a community setting.

The latest figures show 486 MSDC employees used a portion or all of their \$2,000 training allowance. A total of \$657,508 has been used for an average of \$1,353 per employee.

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employment.

Satisfaction: Consumers and their employers report high degrees of satisfaction with the results of participating in SE. Employers are consistently satisfied with the consumers they have hired and with the service they received from the SE staff. Consumers are satisfied with all aspects of their experience except one, the level of employment benefits they receive (e.g., health insurance, paid vacations), a finding that has remained consistent over time.

Summary: SE programs at Indiana mental health centers have successfully served individuals with severe and chronic disabilities for whom finding and keeping competitive work has been difficult. Consumers and employers are very satisfied with the program, and the cost of SE is modest compared to other mental health



Keep In Mind

MSDC/MSH Info Hot Line:
800-903-9822

Div. of Disability, Aging &
Rehab Services:
800-545-7763

Ombudsman: **800-622-4484**

Div. of Mental Health &
Addiction:
800-901-1133

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Future Issues

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- ◆ Your Ideas

**You cannot make yourself feel something you
do not feel, but you can make yourself do
right in spite of your feelings.
Pearl Buck, author**

State of Indiana
Family and Social Services Administration
402 W. Washington St., P.O. Box 7083
Indianapolis, IN 46207-7083

«Name»
«Address»
«City State Zip»